United Nations E/ICEF/2011/4

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
6 December 2010

Original: English

For information

United Nations Children's Fund
Executive Board
First regular session 2011
8-11 February 2011
Item 3 of the provisional agenda*

UNICEF report on recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit

Summary

In accordance with Executive Board decision 2001/4, the present report summarizes the response of UNICEF to recommendations contained in reports of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) that are directly relevant to UNICEF and have not yet been considered by the Executive Board. The seven reports considered in this document were issued by the JIU during the period from September 2009 through August 2010.

* E/ICEF/2011/1.

10-67452 (E) 161210

Please recycle

I. Overview

1. JIU reports are addressed to the executive heads of the organizations concerned, including UNICEF, and contain a series of recommendations for consideration by the executive heads and/or by the legislative organs of the organizations. UNICEF reports yearly to its Executive Board on measures to implement the JIU recommendations, as appropriate. In line with this practice, the present document provides, inter alia: (a) brief information on JIU reports issued from September 2009 through August 2010 that are directly relevant to the administration and management of UNICEF, and comments regarding the pertinent recommendations contained in these reports (see annex 1 for the list of JIU reports and the number of recommendations relevant to UNICEF and the UNICEF Executive Board); and (b) a summary of remarks on JIU recommendations of relevance to the UNICEF Executive Board (see annex 2). The complete reports of the JIU may be obtained through its website (www.unjiu.org).

2. Since the presentation of the previous UNICEF report (E/ICEF/2010/4) to the Executive Board at its first regular session of 2010, UNICEF has continued to work with the JIU on the different reviews being conducted under its auspices, as well as on the follow-up to recommendations contained in its notes and reports. This dialogue and interaction on issues of common interest have increased the relevance of the reports, improved implementation of recommendations and enhanced transparency. Furthermore, member organizations of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination have increasingly cooperated to provide consolidated responses to JIU recommendations.

II. Reports of the JIU of direct relevance to UNICEF

3. The seven JIU reports of direct relevance to UNICEF are summarized below, and additional comments are provided by UNICEF on the recommendations contained therein.

A. Towards more coherent United Nations system support to Africa (JIU/REP/2009/5)

4. The objective of the report is to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the existing system-wide cooperation framework in support of the development of Africa, drawing on and sharing lessons learned. The main findings highlight the proliferation of mandates and insufficient system-wide coordination. The recommendations urge strengthening of the Regional Coordination Mechanism and its cluster system, enhancing the capacities and resources of the Regional Directors Teams in Africa, and greater engagement of African recipient governments in programme planning and implementation, including through the closer alignment of programmes with national development plans and budget cycles.

5. UNICEF welcomes the JIU report and in general agrees with the key issues it identifies, as well as with its recommendations. UNICEF management agrees that there is a need to clarify the roles and responsibilities of different mechanisms, to ensure adequate communication among these mechanisms, and to harmonize results-based management practices across the United Nations system, as all are important components for coherent and coordinated United Nations system support to Africa.

UNICEF also recognizes the need to strengthen and use existing mechanisms to promote coherence.

B. Offshoring in United Nations system organizations: offshore service centres (JIU/REP/2009/6)

6. The main objectives of the report are to provide an assessment of offshoring policies, practice and experience in the United Nations system, and to identify best practices and lessons learned in this area.

7. UNICEF supports all the relevant recommendations contained in the report and agrees that implementing offshoring facilities can result in economic advantages through economies of scale and relatively lower-cost staffing. In addition, UNICEF also fully agrees with the concept of developing an offshoring policy before creating its own offshore centres. However, in order to develop the offshoring policy, many factors must be taken into consideration, such as location, cost of living, infrastructure and human resources.

C. Selection and conditions of service of executive heads in the United Nations system organizations (JIU/REP/2009/8)

8. This review by the JIU addressed the legal and institutional framework and practices in the selection and appointment of executive heads in the United Nations system organizations, including the United Nations Secretary-General. The report aims to assist in the establishment of harmonized selection criteria that would ensure the highest quality of leadership and management, with concomitant conditions of service, at the level of the executive head of each organization.

9. Of the 13 recommendations in this report, 2 are directed to the Secretary-General; 1 to the United Nations Chief Executives Board; and the remaining 10 to the legislative bodies of the United Nations system organizations. Of these 10 recommendations, 8 are relevant to UNICEF and are presented for the consideration of its governing body.

D. The role of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and resident coordinators: a benchmarking framework for coherence and integration within the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2009/9)

10. The purpose of the report is to examine current barriers to the achievement of coherence and integration within the United Nations system, make recommendations to overcome these barriers and propose a flexible model that can be adapted to meet the needs and wants of all countries where the United Nations system operates. The report proposes a benchmarking framework for coherence and integration at all levels across the United Nations system and with its stakeholders/partners. Eighteen benchmarks are proposed.

11. UNICEF welcomes the report of the JIU and recognizes that the benchmarks contained therein are of relevance to the agency. In fact, many of them are already being implemented. However, to further strengthen the relevance of the report, other proposed benchmarks will need to be reviewed further in terms of their use and benefit so as to avoid the risk of increasing transaction costs.

E. Environmental profile of the United Nations system organizations: review of their in-house environmental management policies and practices (JIU/REP/2010/1)

12. Through this review, the JIU assesses the environmental policies and practices of the secretariats of the United Nations system organizations on their sustainable use of resources, including energy consumption, in light of their mission to promote relevant internationally accepted environmental conventions. The report highlights best practices and identifies norms and benchmarks of business policies and measures to be promoted throughout the organizations and their partner entities and organs.

13. The report contains 12 recommendations, 6 of which are relevant to the organization. UNICEF has taken, and continues to take, significant actions to identify and reduce its carbon footprint. The organization also firmly supports the principles of implementing eco-friendly measures for its operations. With respect to the recommendation on the implementation of the plan and policies of the United Nations system organizations, UNICEF notes that, given the high number of countries in which the organization operates, it will take a long time and resources to fully implement this recommendation.

F. Review of travel arrangements within the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2010/2)

14. The main aim of this review by the JIU was to examine existing travel arrangements and consider best practices among United Nations system organizations, with a view to improving services and reducing travel costs.

15. UNICEF supports and concurs with the relevant recommendations contained in the JIU report. A clear UNICEF policy for preferential airfares is already in place, and a number of other negotiations, procedures and tools have been or are being developed for preferential airfares. In addition, UNICEF is a member of Inter-agency Travel Network.

G. Ethics in the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2010/3)

16. The review followed up on an earlier JIU report on oversight lacunae in United Nations system organizations to determine progress, lessons learned, and best practices in establishing and implementing the ethics function throughout the United Nations system. The objective of this review was to provide recommendations leading to a fully operational ethics function in each of the organizations of the United Nations system, designed to cultivate and nurture a culture of ethics, integrity and accountability and to ensure an understanding by all staff of minimum acceptable standards of behaviour.

17. The report contains 17 recommendations, 14 of which are directly relevant to UNICEF. Several of these recommendations have already been implemented, including the one pertaining to the head of the ethics office submitting an annual report or summary to the legislative body.

III. Ongoing/forthcoming JIU reports and notes of relevance to UNICEF

18. UNICEF has been participating in the initial collection of information, in discussions and in review of several JIU draft reports and notes currently being

developed. At the first regular session of the Executive Board in 2012, UNICEF looks forward to presenting its comments, as appropriate, on some or all of the JIU reviews scheduled for completion in 2010 and beyond that have potential relevance to the work of UNICEF. Below is the preliminary list of such reports:

(a) Evaluation of the scope, organization, effectiveness and approach of the work of the United Nations in mine action;

(b) Financing for Humanitarian Operations in the United Nations system;

(c) Inter-agency staff mobility and work/life balance in the organizations of the United Nations system;

(d) Lump sum payments in lieu of entitlements;

(e) Multilingualism in the United Nations system organizations: status of implementation;

(f) Preparedness of the United Nations system organizations for International Public Sector Accounting Standards;

(g) Review of Enterprise Risk Management in the United Nations system: benchmarking framework;

(h) Review of the medical services in the United Nations system;

(i) Review of the United Nations system organizations' policies and procedures for administration of trust funds;

(j) Staff-management relations in the United Nations system;

(k) Status and way ahead for procurement reform in the United Nations system organizations;

(l) System-wide review of South-South cooperation for development;

(m) The audit function in the United Nations system;

(n) United Nations corporate partnerships: the role and functioning of the Global.

Annex 1

List of reports of the Joint Inspection Unit of relevance to UNICEF

JIU report symbol	*Report title*	*Total number of recommendations contained in the report*	*Total number of recommendations of relevance to UNICEF*	*Total number of recommendations of relevance to the UNICEF Executive Board**
JIU/REP/2009/5	Towards more coherent United Nations system support to Africa	17	11	2
JIU/REP/2009/6	Offshoring in United Nations system organizations: offshore service centres	18	16	3
JIU/REP/2009/8	Selection and conditions of service of executive heads in the United Nations system organizations	13	8	8
JIU/REP/2009/9	The role of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and resident coordinators: a benchmarking framework for coherence and integration within the United Nations system	1	1	1
JIU/REP/2010/1	Environmental profile of the United Nations system organizations: review of their in-house environmental management policies and practices	12	6	0
JIU/REP/2010/2	Review of travel arrangements within the United Nations system	9	7	1
JIU/REP/2010/3	Ethics in the United Nations system	17	14	4

* See annex 2.

Annex 2

Summary of UNICEF remarks on recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit of relevance to the UNICEF Executive Board

Relevant recommendations	*Remarks*
(JIU/REP/2009/5) Towards more coherent United Nations system support to Africa	
Recommendation 1: The General Assembly and the legislative bodies of the corresponding United Nations system organizations should invite the Secretary-General and the executive heads of the other United Nations system organizations to undertake a review of their respective mandates pertaining to United Nations system support to Africa, in order to assess the status of implementation, to evaluate resource, monitoring and reporting requirements for implementation and to better clarify the division of labour and responsibilities within the United Nations system and between the different organs, offices and departments of every United Nations system organization.	UNICEF agrees with the need to clarify the roles and responsibilities of existing mechanisms within the United Nations system to promote coherent United Nations support to Africa.
Recommendation 16: The General Assembly and the legislative bodies of the corresponding United Nations system organizations should reaffirm their commitment to results-based management (RBM) and request the executive heads of the United Nations system organizations to harmonize their RBM practices for achieving a common RBM approach at country level with regard to the implementation of the UNDAFs in Africa.	UNICEF reaffirms its commitment to results-based management throughout the planning, implementation and monitoring process within the UNDAF framework, and supports the call to harmonize results-based management practices across the United Nations system.

Relevant recommendations	*Remarks*
(JIU/REP/2009/6) Offshoring in United Nations system organizations: offshore service centres	
Recommendation 1: The governing bodies of United Nations system organizations should request the executive heads, before offshoring services, to develop an offshoring policy which is based on the cost-benefit analysis of all sourcing options for the delivery of services and which is in alignment with the medium- to long-term corporate strategy of the organization. The policy should then be subject to the review and approval of the governing bodies. All inter-agency opportunities, including common/joint policy and project development, should be explored exhaustively before organization-based offshoring policies and projects are prepared.	UNICEF agrees that prior to offshoring, the organization should develop an offshoring policy based on analysis of all sourcing options for the delivery of services and in alignment with the medium- to long-term strategy of the organization.
Recommendation 7: The governing bodies of United Nations organizations should request the executive heads to maintain the international character of the organizations in staffing offshore service centres.	The management of UNICEF supports this proposal, and the recently revised human resources policy of UNICEF on recruitment explicitly defines the organization's position on increased diversity of staff.
Recommendation 15: The governing bodies of United Nations system organizations should exercise their oversight role in offshoring activities, including the implementation of policies, performance evaluation, and assessment of progress in achieving the objectives.	The management of UNICEF is in agreement with the proposal and suggests including this element in any offshoring policy implementation.

Relevant recommendations	*Remarks*
(JIU/REP/2009/08) Selection and conditions of service of executive heads in the United Nations system organizations	
Recommendation 4: The legislative bodies of the United Nations system organizations, which have not yet done so, should establish timelines for the selection process of their executive heads ending at least three months before the expiring date of the mandate of the incumbent, in order to ensure a smooth transition between the incumbent and the incoming executive head.	The Executive Director is appointed by the Secretary-General in consultation with the Executive Board. UNICEF believes that all eight recommendations should be further deliberated by the United Nations Secretariat in consultation with the Executive Board.
Recommendation 5: The legislative bodies of the United Nations system organizations should request all candidates for the post of executive head to submit, together with their curriculum vitae, a certificate of good health signed by a recognized medical facility.	
Recommendation 6: The legislative bodies of the United Nations system organizations should adopt provisions to limit the terms of their executive heads to a maximum of two successive terms not exceeding five years each, if such provisions have not yet been adopted.	
Recommendation 7: The legislative/governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations should condemn and prohibit unethical practices such as promises, favours, invitations, gifts, etc., provided by candidates for the post of executive head or their supporting governments during the selection/election campaign, in return for favourable votes for certain candidates.	

Relevant recommendations	*Remarks*
Recommendation 9: The legislative bodies of the United Nations system organizations should adopt provisions comprehensively addressing conflicts of interest pertaining to, and/or wrongdoing/misconduct allegedly committed by executive heads, if such provisions have not yet been adopted.	
Recommendation 10: The legislative bodies of the United Nations system organizations should direct the internal oversight or ethics office function, as appropriate, or JIU to conduct investigations into alleged cases of wrongdoing or misconduct, including retaliation and irregularities relating to financial disclosure statements, allegedly committed by executive heads of system organizations. The investigating authority should report the outcome of the investigation directly to the legislative body of the respective organization for action on the matter. The JIU, however, can undertake on its own initiative such investigations, should it so decide.	
Recommendation 12: The legislative bodies of the United Nations system organizations should establish rigorous policies regarding the acceptance of gifts, honours, decorations, etc., by their executive heads, where no such policies currently exist.	
Recommendation 13: The legislative bodies of the United Nations system organizations should include in the terms of appointment of their executive heads a provision for a possible termination allowance based on ICSC [International Civil Service Commission] standards, where such a provision is missing.	

Relevant recommendations	*Remarks*
(JIU/REP/2009/9) The role of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and resident coordinators: a benchmarking framework for coherence and integration within the United Nations system	
Recommendation 1: The legislative organs are invited to adopt this benchmarking framework as a yardstick to guide and measure efforts towards a more efficient and effective organization, which would better serve the needs of countries.	The management of UNICEF accepts this recommendation subject to the observations made in the present report.
(JIU/REP/2010/2) Review of travel arrangements within the United Nations system	
Recommendation 9: The governing bodies of United Nations system organizations should request the executive heads to provide reports on travel expenditures by reporting period and steps taken to rationalize travel costs.	All airfare expenditures are being closely monitored. The information is available to both internal and external audit.
(JIU/REP/2010/3) Ethics in the United Nations system	
Recommendation 6: The legislative bodies should direct their respective executive heads to apply term limits to the appointment of the head of the ethics office, which should be a non-renewable appointment of seven years, or no more than two consecutive appointments of four or five years, with no possibility of re-employment by the same organization.	The Ethics Office of UNICEF submitted its first report to the Executive Board of UNICEF at its second regular session of 2010 (E/ICEF/2010/17). Through decision 2010/18 adopted at its second regular session of 2010, the Executive Board of UNICEF requested the Executive Director of UNICEF to limit the term of appointment to five full years, exceptionally renewable once for a maximum of five years. The decision also requests the Executive Director to bar re-entry of the head of the Ethics Office into the organization once the term of the appointment has ended. The current policy of UNICEF is that the head of the Ethics Office is appointed for one five-year term.

Relevant recommendations	*Remarks*
Recommendation 7: The legislative bodies should direct their respective executive heads to ensure that the head of the ethics office submits an annual report, or a summary thereof, unchanged by the executive head, directly to the legislative body, together with any comments of the executive head thereon.	Through decision 2010/18 adopted at its second regular session of 2010, the Executive Board of UNICEF requested the Ethics Office of UNICEF to submit future reports to the Executive Board at its annual sessions.
Recommendation 8: The legislative bodies should direct their respective executive heads to ensure that the head of the ethics office has informal access to the legislative bodies which is enshrined in writing.	The head of the Ethics Office has both formal and informal access to the Executive Board.
Recommendation 17: The legislative bodies should direct their respective executive heads to put forward proposals for an internal mechanism to be established that would set out the modalities for the ethics office and/or the internal oversight service to investigate or undertake reviews of allegations brought against the executive head of the organization, including reporting the outcome of the investigation or review directly to the respective legislative body.	This recommendation is better handled at the level of the Chief Executives Board to ensure harmonization throughout the system. UNICEF is prepared to contribute to the proposals.